GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2826
ANSWERED ON:02.08.2017
Indian Nationals in Neighbouring Countries Jails
Gandhi Shri Dilip Kumar Mansukhlal

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of Indian Prisoners of War are languishing in Pakistan jails and if so, details thereof;

(b) whether a large number of fishermen are also in the jails of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka;

(c) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and country-wise and the steps taken for the release of above prisoners along with the outcome thereof; and

(d) the manner in which the Government proposes to provide help to the families of these fishermen imprisoned in neighbouring countries?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) As per available information, there are 75 missing Indian defence personnel, including 54 Prisoners of War, who are believed to be in Pakistan's custody but their presence has not been acknowledged so far by Pakistan.

(b) to (d) As per the available information, as of 27 July 2017, there are 417 fishermen in Pakistan's custody and 15 fishermen in Sri Lanka's custody, who are believed to be Indian nationals. There are no Indian fishermen in the custody of Bangladesh. In case of Pakistan, consular access is awaited and information about the states that they belong to is not available. In case of Sri Lanka, the 15 fishermen are believed to be from the State of Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry.

The Government attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. As soon as information of apprehension of Indian fishermen is received, the matter is immediately taken up through diplomatic channels with concerned Government and consular access and early release and repatriation of all apprehended Indian fishermen is sought. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is the designated nodal agency for payment of compensation to fishermen lodged in Pakistan jails.

In case of Sri Lanka, a Joint Working Group on Fisheries has been set up as a bilateral institutional mechanism to help find a long-standing solution to all fishermen issues.

Due to persistent efforts, Government has secured release and repatriation of a total of 3951 Indian fishermen from Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, since 2014.